Museum Association QUARTERLY

Los Angeles County Museum / volume 14, number 1, winter 1957-58

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The QUARTERLY *of the Los Angeles County Museum Volume 14, Number 1.*

A MESSAGE FOR THE MUSEUM QUARTERLY

From
LEE A. DUBRIDGE
President of the
California Institute
of Technology

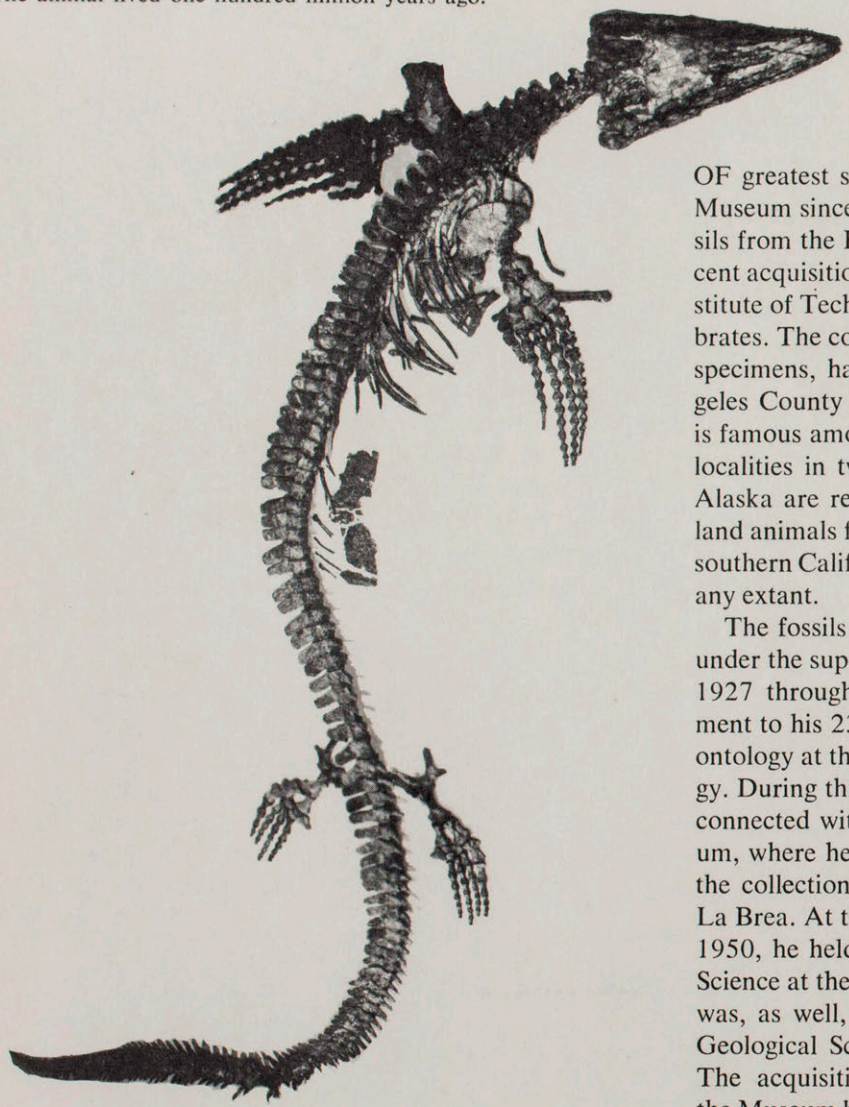
THE TASK of the preservation, advancement and diffusion of knowledge is a challenge which faces every generation. All the intellectual resources of any community are needed to meet this challenge which becomes ever greater with the passing of each century.

A task of especial importance is the collection, preservation, utilization and display of historical, scientific and cultural materials. It is essential that each generation maintain intellectual contact with the generations past, and our libraries and museums are critical elements in maintaining this continuity of our cultural heritage.

One can study the past and learn from it not only by examining the ideas set down in printed form, but also from the ideas expressed in artistic creations and in a myriad of material things used in domestic, industrial, technical or cultural pursuits. It is the museum which collects these relics of both historic and prehistoric eras and brings them to us in a vivid and realistic way and relates them to current ideas and achievements. From the most ancient times, the great museums of the world have been essential elements in maintaining the continuity of man's cultural history. They deserve devoted community support.

1B. Artist Charles R. Knight's conception of this "sea lizard" when alive.
The animal lived one hundred million years ago.

A Hundred Million Years of California's Pre-history in a Famous Collection



1A. Skeleton of a "sea lizard" from the San Joaquin Valley.

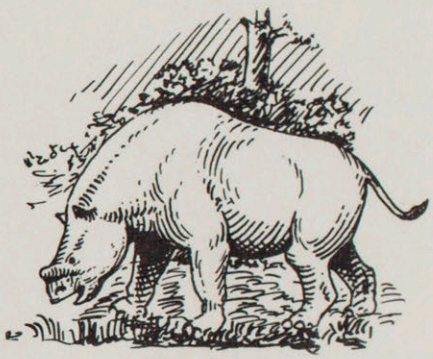
OF greatest significance to paleontology in the Museum since the excavation of the famous fossils from the Rancho La Brea tar pits, is the recent acquisition of the outstanding California Institute of Technology Collection of Fossil Vertebrates. The collection, consisting of over 55,000 specimens, has been acquired for the Los Angeles County Museum. This Caltech collection is famous among paleontologists; 500 collecting localities in twelve western states, Mexico and Alaska are represented, and the assemblage of land animals from the earlier geologic periods of southern California is the most comprehensive of any extant.

The fossils were, for the most part, collected under the supervision of Dr. Chester Stock from 1927 through 1950. They constitute a monument to his 23 years' work in geology and paleontology at the California Institute of Technology. During this same period, Dr. Stock was also connected with the Los Angeles County Museum, where he played a large part in developing the collection of fossil mammals from Rancho La Brea. At the time of his death, in December, 1950, he held the position of Chief Curator of Science at the Museum on a part-time basis, and was, as well, the Chairman of the Division of Geological Sciences at the California Institute. The acquisition of the Caltech collection by the Museum brings together in one institution all of the outstanding accomplishments of Dr. Stock in southern California, concerning paleontology.

The Age of Reptiles, which is so strikingly represented elsewhere in the United States by many spectacular forms of dinosaurs, is only scantily documented in California. Representatives of the few large fossil reptiles that are known from the state are contained in the Caltech collection. These include exhibit specimens of a small duck-bill dinosaur, a sea serpent (Plesiosaur), and a sea lizard (Mosasaur) from the San Joaquin Valley. These creatures must have lived in and beside an inland sea that lay to the west of the Fresno area some 100,000,000 years ago. The Plesiosaur, a fine mounted skeleton measuring approximately 30 feet from the tip of its long, snake-like head and neck to the end of its tail, has already been installed at the Museum, in the Hall of Evolving Life.

The preponderance of the Caltech fossils represents the Age of Mammals, particularly the geologic period known as the Tertiary, which encompasses the 75,000,000 years previous to the time when animals were trapped in the tar pits of Rancho La Brea. Nearly all available information regarding the prehistoric land mammals of this period in southern California is based on fossils in the Caltech collection—beginning with the earliest known: tiny, lemur-like monkeys, primitive squirrel-like rodents, and ancestral rhinoceroses found in the San Diego area in deposits 50,000,000 years old; and primitive dog-like forms, opossums, rodents, deer-like animals, ancestral tapirs and more lemur-like monkeys of the same age, found in the Simi Valley, Ventura County. Representatives from succeeding epochs trace the evolution of rhinoceroses, saber-tooth cats, true cats, dogs, camels, rodents, antelopes and horses in California and other western states. Some specimens, such as the "pig-deer" from Ventura County and an extinct rabbit, 40,000,000 years old, occur as practically complete skeletons on slabs of rock that can be displayed so as to reveal the fossils almost exactly as they were found. Others have been removed from the rock and are prepared for mounting; an ancient camel and an ancestral saber-tooth cat of 40,000,000 years ago are thus represented. A series of skulls of extinct rhinoceroses ranging in age from 5,000,000 to 40,000,000 years demonstrate that this group of animals

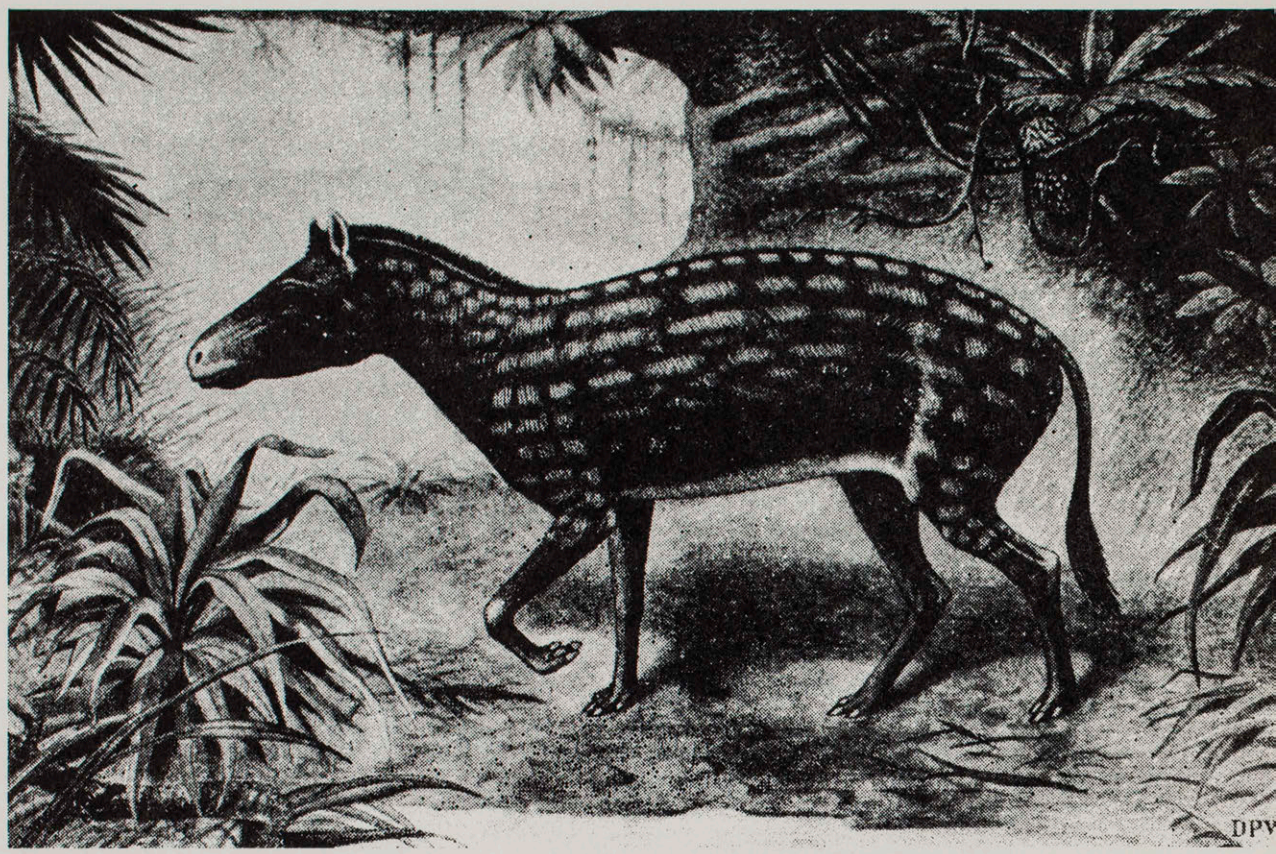
2. Lemur-like monkey of the Eocene Epoch—lived fifty million years ago in what is now San Diego County. *After Savage, Downs & Poe.*



3. A brontothere—relative of the rhinoceros—lived fifty million years ago in California. *After Savage, Downs and Poe.*

lived in the western United States for millions of years before they became restricted to the tropics of Africa and Asia. Another group of rhinoceros-like animals, but of gigantic size, were the Titanotheres. Spectacular horned skulls of at least three different species of these creatures, that lived in the Death Valley area 40,000,000 years ago, are among the important display items in the collection.

One of the most outstanding specimens is a mounted skeleton of the earliest three-toed horse, *Eohippus*. This is perhaps the only standing mount of *Eohippus* in existence. The creature was so delicate that specimens are usually shown in a slab. The Museum owns a replica of this specimen, which has been on display in the Ascent of Equus exhibit on the mezzanine. The



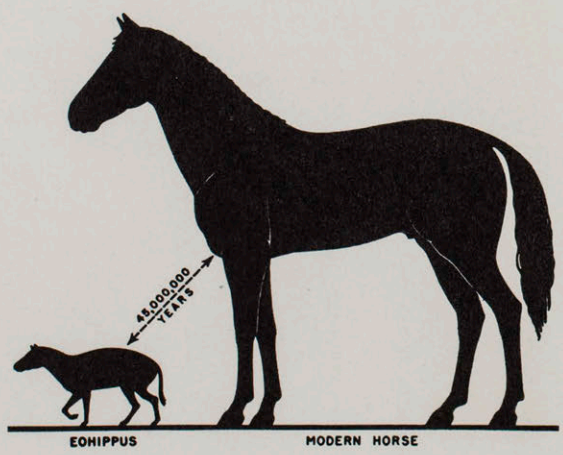
4. Eohippus—the earliest known horse—had three toes on the hind feet and four on the front feet. The silhouettes compare *Eohippus* with the modern horse. *After Stock.* The restoration depicts *Eohippus* as it might have appeared in life. *After Stock.*

replica has now been replaced by the real fossil. Three other ancestral horses (ages 40,000,000—20,000,000—and 10,000,000 years respectively) are represented in the collection by completely prepared skeletons that require only the mechanics of mounting to ready them for display.

The evolution of the North American antelopes is traced by skulls of eight different types, with display restorations already prepared to show what the animals looked like in life.

One of the more unusual specimens is a rock slab containing the skeletons of a small extinct rhinoceros and an ancient turtle together; the slab represents the 50,000,000 year-old riverbed resting place of the remains of these two creatures.

From the Quaternary geologic period are excellent specimens of mammals and birds that lived in Mexico at the time the Rancho La Brea tar pits were trapping animals of the southern



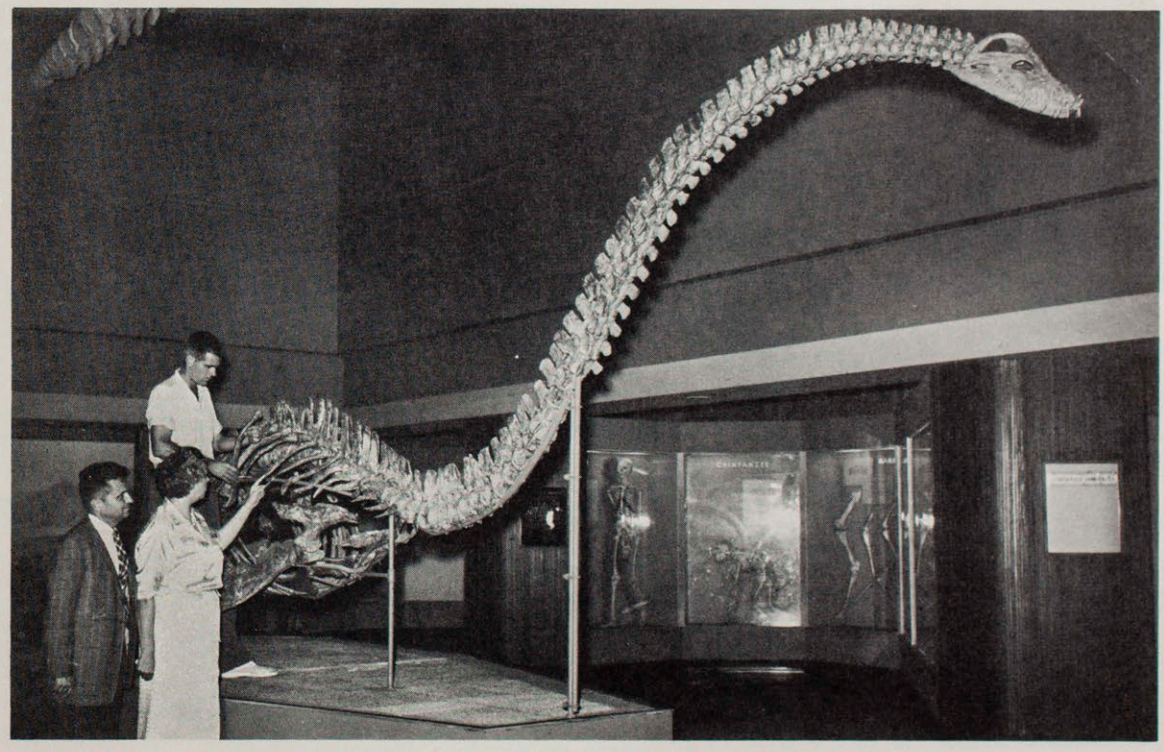
California area. Some of the species that occurred at Rancho La Brea—such as the Dire Wolf, small Ground Sloth, and the great Teratornis vulture—were found in the Mexican deposits; others from Mexico, such as the horse and a large deer, were somewhat different from the related forms from Rancho La Brea. Also of the Quaternary period, but from a Nevada cave, are bones, claws, hair and dung of the small Ground Sloth; and from California, extremes in size of the mammoths of the Ice Age—a large, 14-ft specimen of Imperial Mammoth, found in Eagle Rock, and a tiny, 6-ft Dwarf Mammoth from Santa Rosa Island.

When the exhibit of the fossils of various ages from the Caltech collection is completed, it will occupy a gallery of its own, and will supplement the story told by the Rancho La Brea fossils, carrying the prehistory of the vertebrate animals of the west back 100,000,000 years.

As valuable and interesting as the exhibit specimens are, the tremendous number of fossils in the reference part of the collection are even more significant, scientifically. As we have indicated above, most of the scientific knowledge of southern California's Tertiary mammals is based on this collection. One hundred and ninety-two types—that is, specimens from which extinct species have been described—are contained in the collection. Many of the groups of animals are yet to be studied in detail. The Museum will now become a center of research interest for specialists on the earlier fossil vertebrates as well as on the Rancho La Brea fossils. Scientists at the University of Kansas, University of Wisconsin, University of California, University of Oregon, Amherst College, and the U.S. National Museum are already at work on various groups from the Caltech material. The collection is being curated here under the supervision of Dr. Theodore Downs, Curator of Vertebrate Paleontology. Through him students and specialists in paleontology may arrange to examine and study the particular localities or groups of their interest.

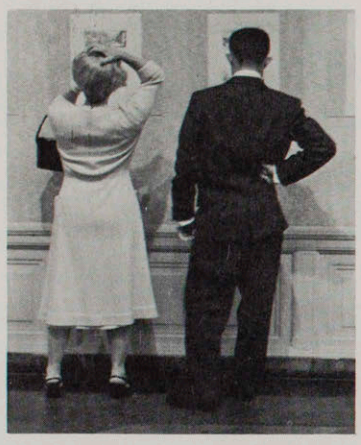
HILDEGARDE HOWARD, *Chief Curator*
Division of Science

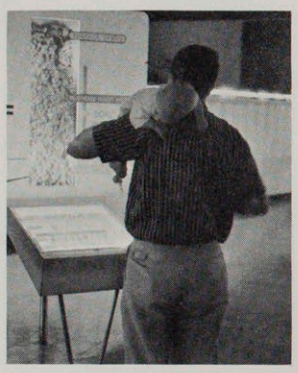
Plesiosaur—already installed in the Museum's Hall of Evolving Life is this fine, 30 feet long mounted skeleton.

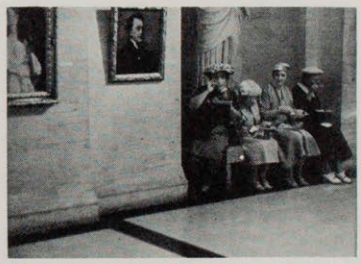


The Museum Visitor... why does he come?

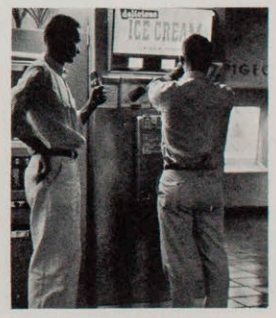
To be amused.
Or amazed. To meet his girl.
To get educated, or at least make a start. Out of curiosity. Or loneliness. To kill time. Or wait for a train.
As the captive of a visiting school class. Or Cub Scout group. To show Aunt Tilly the strange city's sights.
A Museum Visitor can be very old or very young.
Thin. Or fat. And all shapes and sizes between to match the sculpture or painting.
He comes from many lands.
He comes alone and meditates.
He arrives in pairs.
Threesomes, family groups.
He moves studiously, with dignity. Or he's a rusher on a fifteen minute marathon, out "to do the museum or die" before the ball game starts.







Curiously, she sometimes identifies herself with a work of art.
The Museum Visitor loves art.
Also history.
And science.
Society is present.
There's the clubwoman. The businessman. And your expert.
And there's Dennis the Menace.
The Visitor gets puzzled, awed, bored. Pleased.
And tired.
Sometimes he follows the crowd. Mostly he looks, and walks, and reads the labels. He buys catalogues and postcards. He gets hungry and eats. Thirsty and drinks. He gathers in groups. He chats. He argues.



He comes to enjoy himself

Party at the Famous Essenerhof Hotel, Essen. Left to right: R. F. Brown; Henry S. Francis, Cleveland Museum of Art; Paul Harris, Louisville Museum; Perry Cott, National Gallery; Porter McCray, Museum of Modern Art.

Museum Pieces: Dr. Brown, Art Curator, in Europe

"TEN years ago almost all of the art museums, opera houses, legitimate theaters of Germany lay demolished. Today *all* have been re-built. Look at Cologne—after the war, rubble. And now it has three new art museums and an opera house, each beautiful! The German people's appreciation of these things that have profound values, that fulfill men, has provided an anchor for social, intellectual stability."

These were the thoughts of Dr. Richard F. Brown, Chief Curator of Art of the Los Angeles County Museum, who had just returned from a three months' European visit. At the invitation of the West German Republic, he and five other American museum representatives had been given a royal five-weeks' tour of the country and all of its art museums. The dual purpose of the visit was to reciprocate the tour the United States State Department gave nine German art directors in 1952 and to show the Americans what Germany had been able to accomplish since the war. As Art Director, Dr. Brown profited immeasurably from the journey. He also gained ten pounds ("The Mosel, Rhine wine, beer all over Germany is just delicious.") His enthusiastic determination to reminisce was not undermined by five phone calls and two staff visits during an hour's interview.

En route to Germany, Dr. Brown contacted some business and some glory. The Museum now reflects both. At Lincoln, Nebraska, at the annual meeting of the American Association of Museums, he was elected a member of the influential American Association of Art Museum Directors. (Dr. Brown, in his early forties, appears youthful, and his manner, affable, even exuberant, at times, belies the dignity such an honor bestows). In New York City he secured several gifts including a painting by Hogarth, with a total value of $68,000. In Paris at the sale of the Margaret Biddle Collection, "a Gauguin went for $300,000 and upset the apple cart in the art market. And I spent a charming week-end at the Château Clères, with Director of the Museum Jean Delacour as host," recalled Dr. Brown. He had no luck at Vienna, Paris and the Weinberg sale in London, but in Zurich he found Delacroix's "Henry the IV and Marie de Medici" once in the collection of painter Edgar Degas. A coup!

With Museum business successfully completed, Dr. Brown settled down to being a guest of the West German Republic. The official wish

materialized: the Americans were indeed impressed. The Germans had managed to save almost all of their art collections by storing them in salt mines, specially-built vaults in outlying districts, in cathedral treasury rooms. And the American art directors were shown world-renowned, broadly representative collections, mostly of paintings, dating back as far as the Roman period.

When questioned about the highlights of the tour, Dr. Brown designated the Kaiser Friederich Collection in Berlin as "the best and almost the biggest" and Munich's Pinakothek "the biggest and almost the best." As for the city of Bamberg, "the whole place is a museum—roads, bridges, everything! It is *the* primary example of total medieval." Dr. Brown began to indulge in fantasy when he recollected seeing the ceiling fresco by Tiepolo in the Residenz Palast in Wurzburg: he was so awed by it that he "almost fell off the balustrade." He went on to describe the "rapturous rococo experience" of his first sight of the Vierzehn Heiligen. "As we entered the church, the organ played, a mass was begun, and I floated out of that painted dome with all the other angels." A baron provided an entrée into the Schonborn family castle Pommersfelden. Dr. Brown said, "I was absolutely unprepared for it: the countryside, the deer, the building itself—a great example of castle structure. And then inside, a thousand paintings! Little items like Rembrandt, Boticelli, Titian . . . They revived me with wine."

An art director profits, as man and director, from the experience of seeing art that he has never before seen. But the German tour offered other opportunities of real value.

The Americans learned a great deal about new museum techniques. The Germans, due to postwar circumstances, had been forced to be progressive, to experiment. There had been failures, but also some remarkable solutions to age-old problems of installation, lighting, conservation and handling of paintings, museum architecture and design. Dr. Brown cited the example of the use of plastics in a *tasteful* manner for installaitons: coverings, pedestals, partitions. In a new approach to the use of partially demolished buildings, the Germans created museums of medieval churches. Instead of re-building the parts and restoring the details, they spent their resources in achieving a well-constructed, safe building and then in filling it with displays of ivory crucifixes, chalices, vestments and other pieces of the period.

Garden party at home of Dr. Meyer, Director of Hamburg Museum. Left to right: R. F. Brown, Henry S. Francis, Cleveland Museum of Art; Mrs. Alfred Hentzen, wife of director of Hamburg Kunsthalle; Perry Cott, National Gallery, Washington.

Dr. Richard Brown and other American museum personnel with their hosts, German museum directors and wives, in one of Hamburg's famous bierstuben.

The German tour provided one more little item of interest. Dr. Brown made connections with museum personnel that may well result in extremely fine loan exhibitions at the Los Angeles County Museum.

E. S. O.

A Pioneer Photographer and His California Album

OF interest to California history enthusiasts, anthropologists, and archeologists are more than 2000 glass plate negatives made by Adam Clark Vroman before the turn of the century.

Mr. Vroman's pictorial story, now being catalogued by the history division, includes views of twenty-one missions taken in 1895 before they were restored, studies of remote Indian tribes throughout the Southwest, and scenes of places and people he loved.

Besides being founder of Vroman's bookstore in Pasadena in 1894, A. C. Vroman was a patron of the arts and a photographer extraordinary. Pictures in the sixteen albums he gave the Pasadena Public Library have been compared with the best work by more recent photographers of the same scenes.

After his death in 1916 his collection was acquired by the county and ended up in the museum's basement vault. Ruth I. Mahood, curator of history, came across Vroman's list of negatives and saw that here might be a valuable find.

Brushing off the dust of some fifty years, she examined the glass plates through a viewer. "This was not the work of an amateur," she said. "Adam Clark Vroman was an artist with the camera. And he wanted to share his experiences with everyone."

Vroman was born in La Salle, Illinois, April 15, 1856. In his early years he worked as a train dispatcher for the Burlington railroad.

"His development as a lover of books and art, of archeology and photography does not astonish me," wrote Lawrence Clark Powell, author, critic and librarian at the University of California at Los Angeles. "Railroading is actually one

of the most aesthetic of all occupations . . . Sight and sound of the Limited, flashing through a small station, and the sadness of a whistling locomotive in the still hours of the night, are the purest of poetry; and their role in exciting young Vroman's imagination to read and travel does not seem far-fetched to me."

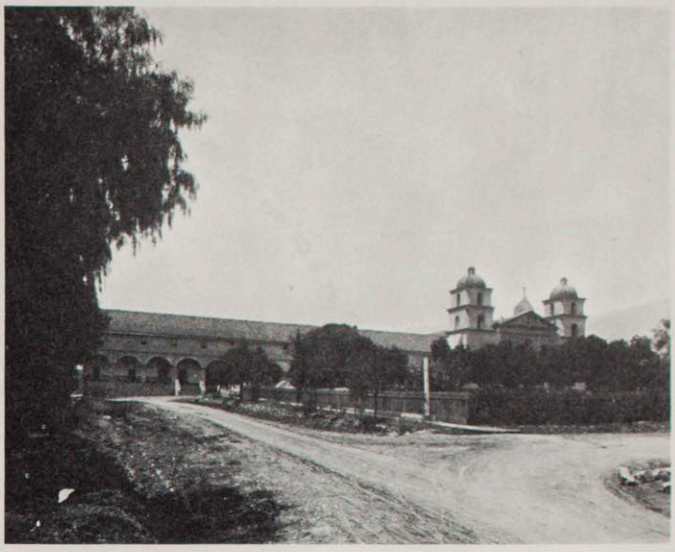
Because of the illness of his Quaker wife, Esther, Vroman brought her to Pasadena in 1894. Here he sold his collection of fine books in order to open a bookstore in a partnership called Glasscock and Vroman, and soon acquired sole interest from his partner, the late J. S. Glasscock.

About a year later Mrs. Vroman died. Vroman never remarried.

The store became at once a cultural center, where gathered men of science and letters like John Burroughs, Charles F. Lummis, Edwin Markham, John Muir, and many others. As it prospered, Vroman grew more and more interested in the Southwest, journeying often over the Indian country and the Sierra Nevada and recording what he saw with his camera.

Photographic equipment in those days was cumbersome, and the terrain was often remote and sometimes steep. "When the roads were too rough he'd just leave the buggy behind," said Russell Belous, assistant curator of history.

Vroman was official photographer for an expedition to all the pueblos led 1897 by the late Dr. Frederick Webb Hodge, then director of the Southwest Museum. His work illustrated Dr.

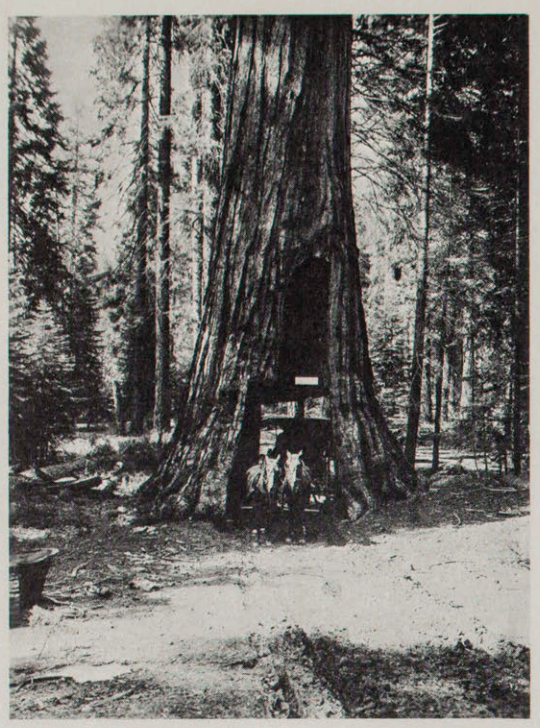


Santa Barbara Mission

La Purisma Concepcion Mission

Vroman's Book Store

Carmelo. The Carmel Valley from the top of the hill



Yosemite Valley Big Tree

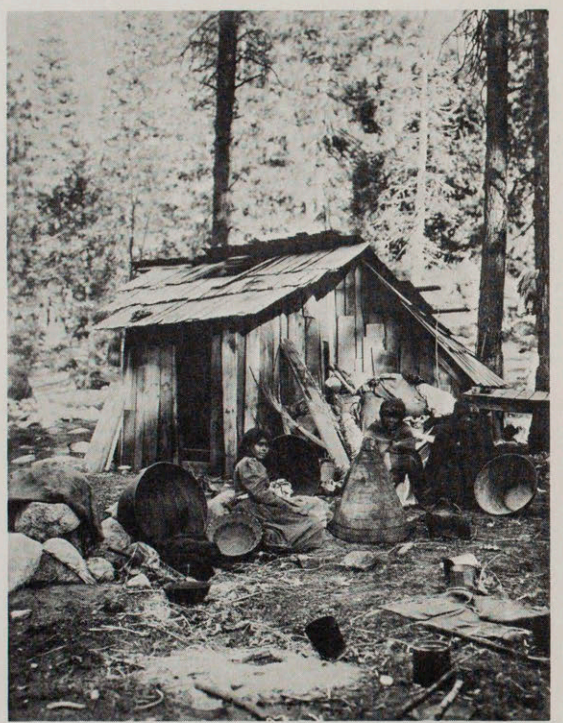
San Fernando Mission

Hodge's account of the difficult ascent of Mesa Encantada, and helped disprove a report that the Enchanted Mesa had never been inhabited.

Of particular interest to Vroman were the Hopi and Navaho Indian cultures. His collection of Indian artifacts may be seen at the Southwest Museum.

During the first of several trips to the Orient Vroman began a collection of Netsuki, Japanese and Chinese carved figurines. This, the finest collection in the world at the time, was later sold to Mrs. Russell Sage of New York and was given by her to the Metropolitan Museum of Art there, as the A. C. Vroman collection.

Besides the album of photographs given the



Yosemite Valley. Indian cabin near Indian Canyon Trail.

Pasadena Public Library, Vroman donated a large collection of Southwest literature, along with a bequest for $10,000 to be used to add to it.

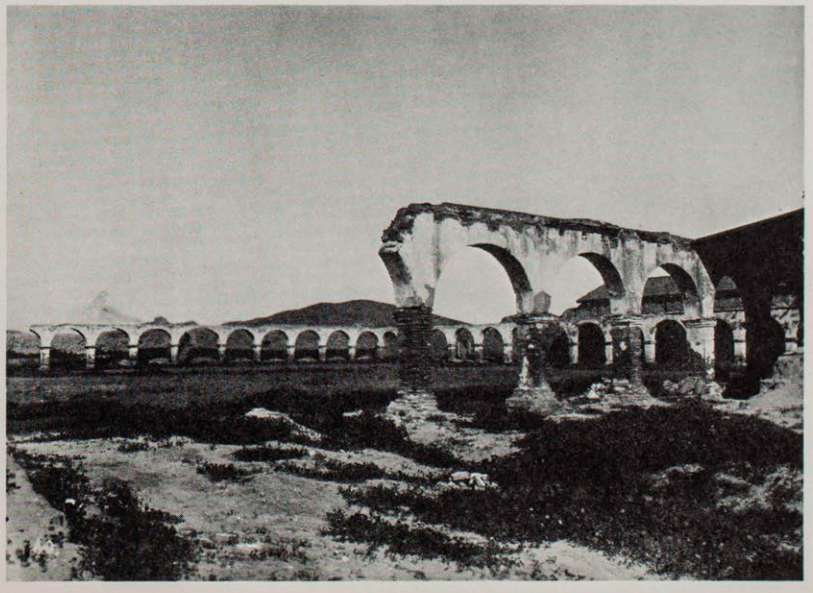
He founded an intimate group of fellow photographers called The Club, and was founder and secretary of the Twilight Club, a small group of writers, teachers, and business and professional men with a common interest in cultural subjects.

New data on Vroman is reaching the museum daily, according to Russell Belous. An exhibition of the Vroman photographs and photographic equipment will be held as soon as all pertinent material can be assembled.

A.v.B

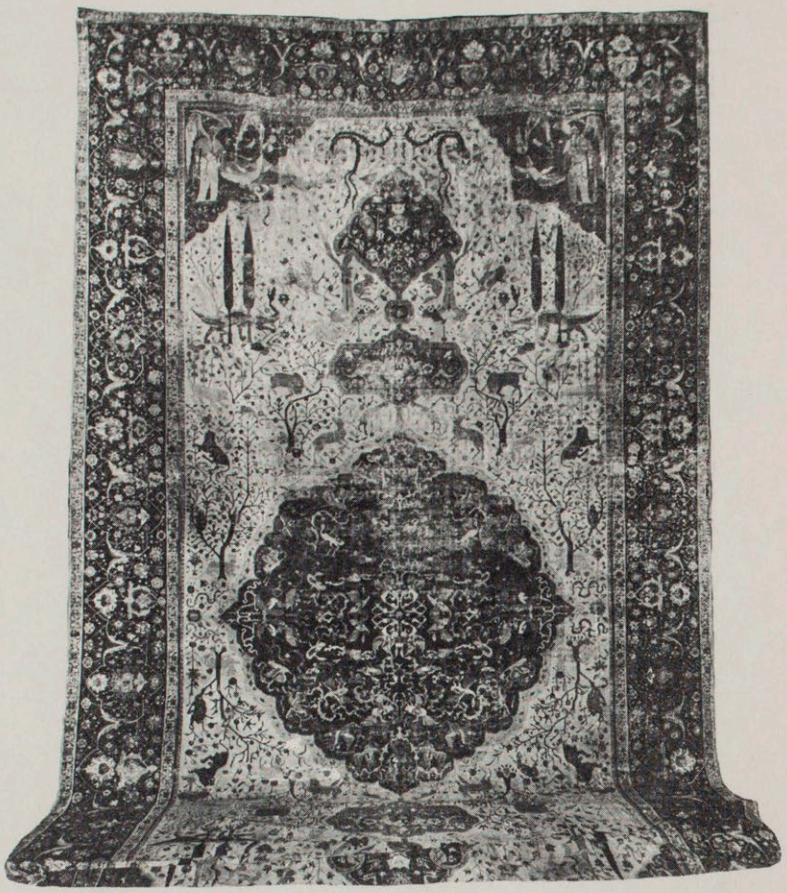
Del Mar Hotel

San Gabriel Mission



San Juan Capistrano Mission

The Million Dollar Carpets



Coronation Carpet. Medallion carpet with animals and figures. Northwest Persian Safavid Dynasty. Early 16th century. Gift of Jean Paul Getty, A.5895.48-2.

THE Ardebil and Coronation carpets given the museum by Jean Paul Getty in 1953 and 1948 respectively are among the masterpieces of Persian carpet weaving still in existence.

Made on the royal looms of Tabriz in northwest Persia, the Ardebil carpet is one of a pair presented to the Moslem shrine at Ardebil by shah Tahmasp (1524-11576). The carpet may have lain before the tomb of his father, Ismail I, who assumed the throne of Persia and founded the Safavid dynasty; or perhaps before that of their ancestor Sheikh Sefi (d. 1384), whose mausoleum had made the city of Ardebil famous.

Following his example of religious devotion, Sheikh Sefi's descendants made the family name synonymous with a mystic form of Mohammed-

anism whose poetry is reflected in the holy carpets.

Both carpets disappeared during the Persian-Russian war in the early nineteenth century, and turned up later in the hands of a private London collector. According to J. Paul Getty, the painter Whistler was among enthusiasts who helped raise a public subscription to buy one of the pair of Ardebil for the Victoria and Albert Museum. Lord Duveen eventually acquired the other Ardebil carpet and "wouldn't part with it until the war forced him to," Getty told newsmen recently.

The carpet is inscribed, signed, and dated by its maker, "the slave of this holy place, Maksoud of Kashan."

"Maksoud's name is more prominent in certain directions than even that of the sovereign whose slave he was," wrote collector and connoisseur Sydney Humphries. Humphries speculated that no ordinary slave would be allowed to weave a carpet so important, and that the inscription was an extraordinary reward for work well done.

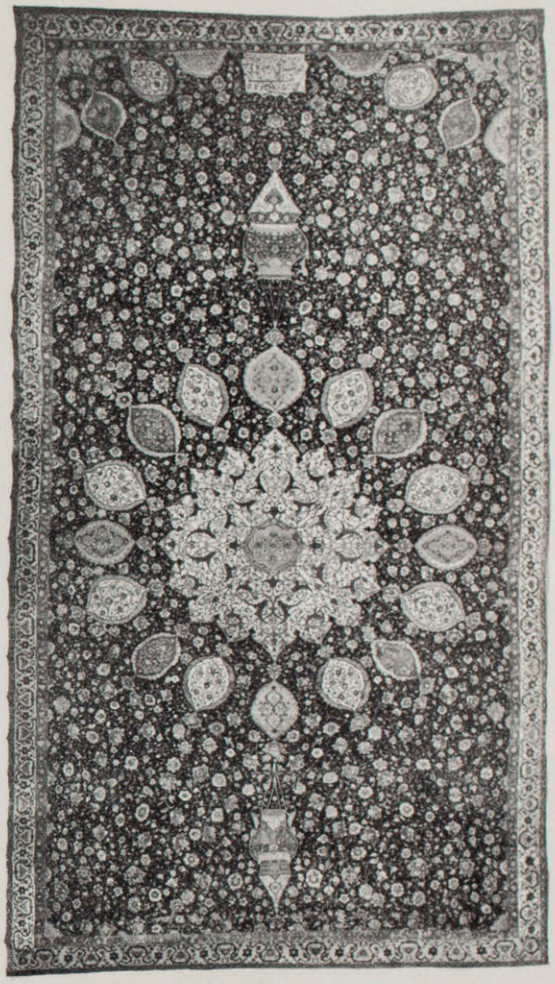
The date, 942, corresponding to the Christian year 1535, enables the collector to fix the date of carpets with similar characteristics.

The "Coronation Carpet" is so named because it was lent in 1902 for the coronation of Edward VII in Westminster Abbey. A court painting of the scene, now hanging in Buckingham Palace, shows the carpet plainly, laid before the throne.

This medallion carpet, containing animals and figures, was also made in northwest Persia early in the sixteenth century at the beginning of the Safavid dynasty.

"The motif is that of a dreamlike garden of abundant flowers and trees through which animals both wild and tame are moving. This is a fantastic conception of earthly paradise according to the idea of the Persians as expressed in their poetry, a paradise conceived as well watered, blossoming gardens and rich hunting grounds," wrote William R. Valentiner, former art curator of the museum.

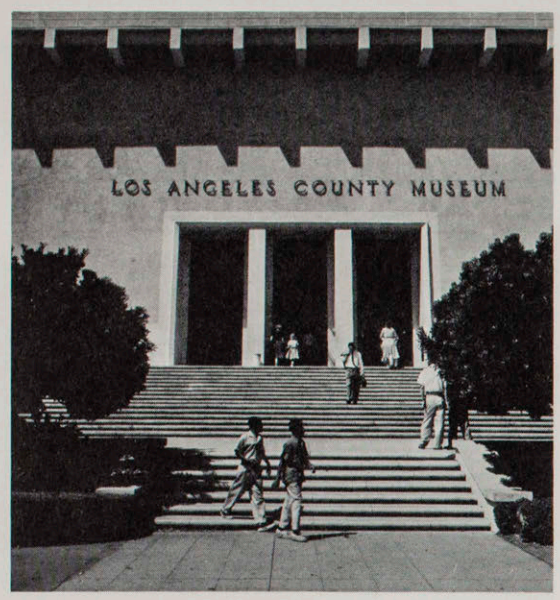
Among the carpet's former owners was Clarence H. Mackay of New York. It has been shown three times at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, as well as at other exhibitions, and was last lent to the Kansas City Museum.



Ardabil Carpet. Northwest Persia, court looms of Tabriz. Safavid Dynasty, dated 1535 A.D. Gift of Jean Paul Getty, A.5895-53-13.

Until recently it hung in the museum foyer here. At present it is in New York being cleaned —a delicate process that will take months to accomplish.

A.v.B.



The Museum Association: Retrospect and Prospect

PERHAPS you have seen our new symbol. But if you understand its meaning, its total concept, you will better understand your own relation to the whole.

Here the man symbolizes those human sympathies, yearnings, and intellectual achievements which are broadly termed "The Humanities"—and which give us the basic classical and educational attributes of the Museum.

His triangular head represents the three distinct but related aspects of the Museum: History, Science, and Art. These are but three different faces of the common body of man's cultural struggle upward from barbarianism.

M A symbolizes *you*—your interest, your driving force, which alone makes the Museum live and nourish the continuing enthusiasm that breeds greatness.

In days past, we have most often thought of Paris as the meeting place of great minds, as a forum for the informal interchange of new and exciting ideas, as a friendly place where one could come to know those people who share a common interest in the arts and sciences, as a place made stimulating by travellers each famed in his own field.

But this is not Paris and this is not yesterday! The place is Here and the time is Now!

These are "Museum Association Specials." Have you been a part of them?

Lectures. Our enjoyment of the exhibition of the "Arts of the T'ang Dynasty" was enhanced by Laurence Sickman's great lecture on "T'ang Painting"—but an equal thrill was informally

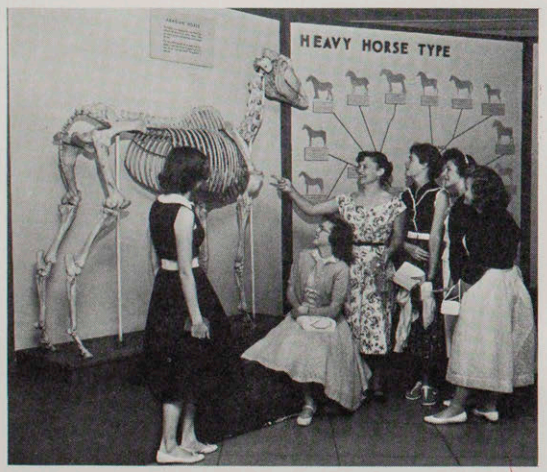
meeting and talking to this man who is Director of the Nelson Gallery and one of the world's leading authorities on Oriental Art. He came from far away Kansas City for this moment. Also, we invited Dr. Jacob Rosenberg, Professor of Fine Arts and Curator at the eminent Fogg Museum at Harvard University, to talk to us about "Picasso—Draughtsman and Graphic Artist." The lively talks spiced the evening with a spirit of contagious excitement. There were more—others are to come.

Christmas Party. Fun and gaiety—music, song and dance! These are the words which reflect the Museum Association Christmas Party for all International Students in our area. We wish you all had been there to see the costumes from many lands and to watch the gentlemen from your Executive Board carving the turkey.

Invitation to Enjoy. Surely you've heard of, or perhaps participated in the program series "Invitation to Enjoy." These Saturday morning programs were especially for children who, with their families, enjoyed tours of the Museum and other great landmarks and institutions in the Los Angeles area. A special treat accompanied the first of the series—hot dogs, cookies and milk served on the lawn of the Museum—springboard of delight for all the children.

Reception. The activities of your Association include receptions for the openings of all major shows. Here, in this picture, you see people enjoying the opening of the Canadian Exhibition. Many famous personalities were there to meet and talk to the Canadian Consul. Unique among the many openings was that for the National Science Fair, where youthful winners from Southern California mingled with the national winners and enjoyed refreshments.

Coffee Hours. Know your Museum—and meet the people! Club and museum groups from all over Southern California partook of this opportunity for special guided tours, followed by hospitality Coffee Hours given by the Museum Association. These Coffee Hours provided a pleasant and unhurried moment when people



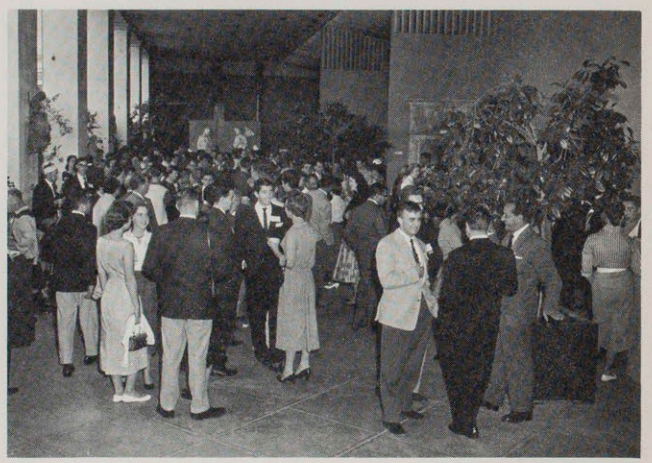
could meet and talk to the curators, preparators and others involved in the very fascinating process of arranging and hanging an exhibition.

Two of the great programs spearheaded by the Museum Association and now taken over by the County are the Educational Film Program, which brings exciting and beautiful documentary films to twelve outlying areas in addition to the Museum, and the Chamber Music Concerts given in our auditorium on Sundays.

The enrichment and enjoyment of both these programs is still our great concern. To enhance the film showings, this year the Association arranged for special art exhibitions to accompany these films so that those people unable to get into the Museum could still partake of its delights!

These are only a prelude to the future! With your active interest in the Museum, and membership and support of the Association, we can continue to bring noteworthy events to our city and enrich the lives of all our citizens.

V.S.W.



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